



Testimony on Senate Bill 469

Submitted by Suzanne Bates, Policy Director

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My name is Suzanne Bates. I am the policy director for the Yankee Institute for Public Policy, a Connecticut-based free market think tank.

I would like to express our support for Senate Bill 469.

Eliminating cash bail for the lowest-risk defendants is a good first step on the path to reforming our cash bail system.

In addition, we support the proposal to erase a person's criminal record after five years if they are charged with a misdemeanor drug crime and are not rearrested during those five years. A person's bad choices should not necessarily follow them around for the rest of their life. The criminal justice system should be based both on the need for public safety and the need for rehabilitation.

On the state's pre-trial system – we would like to see additional reforms in the future. The Yankee Institute recently released a report in which we suggest that the state should move to an entirely non-cash bail system, and would include the use of a risk-assessment tool.

The system we propose would categorize arrestees as low-, moderate- and high-risk. The options for dealing with those arrestees are as follows:

- Low-risk offenders who are unlikely to commit additional crimes and are likely to return for their court dates would be released on their own recognizance.
- The state can manage defendants placed into a moderate-risk category with tools such as supervision, electronic monitoring, or other interventions.
- High-risk arrestees should remain in jail until trial.

Thank you.